Today, Pig Stands can be found in Beaumont, San Antonio, and Houston. Richard Hailey remains dedicated to preserving the heritage of the Pig Stands, and serves as the unofficial historian for the company. The company capitalizes on its history in marketing and promotions, and is considering rehabilitation of the Pig Stand on Presa Street in San Antonio, the only 1920s building still in existence. Recently, Richard Hailey acquired the squatting pig, the well-publicized programmatic structure found a few miles east of the Presa location, and relocated it to his parking lot for rehabilitation. It now sits a few feet away from Hailey's office in a modified Weber Root Beer stand and is the centerpiece of his own outdoor museum.

For those of you who have not visited a Pig Stand, the original pig sandwich is still on the menu and the company continues its great traditions under family supervision and a glowing "sign of the pig."

This article was written by Dwayne Jones, Assistant Director, National Register Programs, Texas Historical Commission, with assistance from Roni Morales, Managing Editor of the Texas Historical Commission's Medallion.

Jeff Winstel

Petroliana and the Cultural Landscape

Preserving a Gas Station in a Historic Canal Town

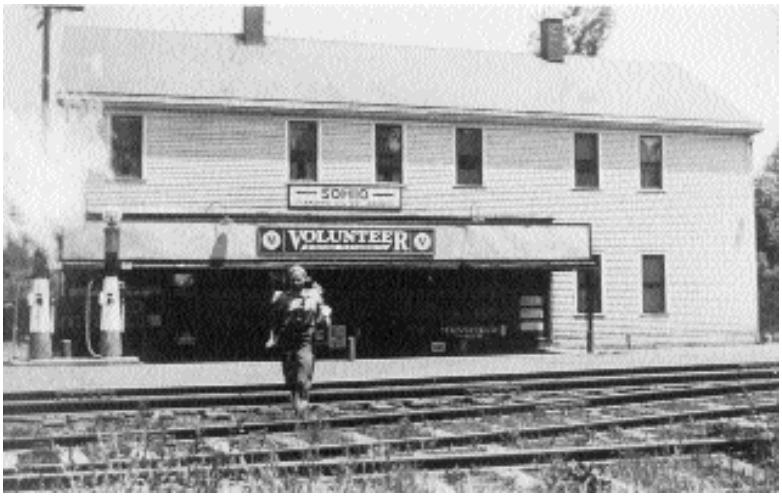
The built environment of Boston, Ohio conveys a sense of small town nostalgia. More than the individual historic elements, it is the physical nearness of juxtaposing historic periods that creates a feeling of casualness and accessibility. A visitor to Boston experiences something similar to discovering a rare find at a flea market rather than viewing an interpreted and carefully displayed artifact in a museum. The lack of discernable cultural boundaries in the landscape is best represented by the close proximity of the imposing 1836 Boston General Store to the concrete block 1946 M.D. Garage. These two very different structures from very different time periods, oddly enough, work well together; the contrast between them is typical of small towns, where land use boundaries are blurred and the village reads as one community.

In October, the Boston General Store opened as a canal boat building museum. Located along the Ohio & Erie Canal's un-watered prism and restored towpath, this Federal/ Greek Revival structure is strongly associated with the heyday of the canal. As part of the restoration and reuse of this structure, the adjacent M.D. Garage will be preserved and used as a maintenance storage facility.

The preservation maintenance work for the garage is a fairly moderate treatment plan, consisting of repairing the existing concrete block walls, metal lintels, and brick sills and chimney. Deteriorated material was replaced in-kind as necessary. The deteriorated composition roofing on a corrugated metal deck was replaced with a contemporary flat roof system. The light treatment of the garage structure could result in a nondescript structure overpowered by the extensive restoration of the adjacent Boston General Store. Rather than allowing the small M.D. Garage to become completely obscured by the restored 1836 Canal-era commercial structure, the building will continue to add to the texture of the townscape by reintroducing the vintage pumps and signs.

The Boston Company Store (left) and the M.D. Garage, summer 1996.

Built in 1946, this single story M.D. Garage is constructed of concrete block. The building is



Volunteer Food Store/ SOHIO Station, Boston, Ohio.

Photos from the collection of Pat Taylor.

set back approximately 20' from Boston Mills Road and was fronted by a circular gravel drive that skirted a cement island which held two 1960s gas pumps flanking a tall "Union 76/ Be Sure with Pure" sign. Beneath the transom of the entry door is a small proprietor identification sign: "Marjan Dzerzynski." Next to the door was a porcelain blue and white "Approved Station/ Be Sure with Pure Lubrication" sign. Holes from the bolts that held the sign on the building are still evident. In front of the building stood an old air pump and an old Tokeim pump, presumably for diesel fuel. A hand-painted, wide sign runs the length of the parapet. The white Art Deco style letters spell out M.D. Garage on a black ground with a thin white border. The M.D. Garage embodied many aspects of the typical 1940s era garage: a dealer operated station affiliated with a large oil company providing full repair and maintenance service.

The Streamlined Moderne feel of the building, such as the horizontal bands and stripped down surfaces, is consistent with the design forms alluding to the speed and efficiency of the machine age. Moreover, the straightforward functionality of the building suggests an engineering aesthetic resulting from the combination of use and standard rectangular design elements. In many ways, the characteristics of the M.D. Garage building and business represent the culmination of technological and economic forces that made the gas station a staple of the American landscape.

Prior to the first gas station, gasoline was purchased as an industrial commodity. Turn-of-the-century motorists would have to obtain the fuel from hardware stores.[1] Transferring the fuel into the car was a dangerous and messy procedure. In 1905, entrepreneurs Lessige and Greener started the St. Louis-based Automobile Gasoline Company and greatly improved the issuance of the fuel by attaching a flexible piece of rubber hose to an upright storage tank. The first gas station appeared in 1907, when a Standard Oil of California (Chevron) bulk station operator used an old water heater mounted on a stand to dispense gasoline. By 1910, gas was dispensed from underground tanks using a pump and hose.[2]

Curb pumps soon began appearing alongside city streets and in front of country general stores throughout the country. Although ideal for small towns, curb pumps created traffic congestion in the cities. The Gulf Oil Company opened the first off-street filing station in Pittsburgh in 1913, creating a building type that would become a common landscape element for the rest of the century.

Branded gasoline stations started developing around 1915. These gasoline stations sometimes had elaborate structures, such as pagodas, neo-classical edifices worthy of housing civic offices, and the quaint English cottage used by the Pure Oil Company. By the mid-1920s major oil companies noticed that oil jobbers were supplying unbranded gasoline to repair garages and automotive dealers. By the mid-1920s, these branded gas stations became service stations, offering gasoline and limited automotive maintenance and repair service.

In 1925, 250,000 filing stations were pumping gas nationwide. Three years later, Memphis oil jobber John Mason Houghland developed discount gas. By purchasing the fuel direct from refineries, shipping it by train, and dispensing it at stations along railroad track spur lines, he was able to cut out the middle man. A historic photograph of train tracks in Boston depicts such a filling station.

The tall pumps depicted in the photograph appear to be the type developed and perfected by John J. Tokheim, a Ft. Wayne hardware merchant, in 1906. These compact visible and cylinder-measuring pumps featured a water-separating glass dome. Although Tokheim pumps were a great improvement over the first workable gasoline pumps—designed as coal oil pumps by Sylvanus F. Bowser in 1885—operators could still rig the dial indicator. By the end of the 1920s, electric meter pumps with clock face indicators began appearing along street curbs. These pumps signaled the delivery of every gallon of gasoline with the ringing of a bell.[3]

Like many country stores that sold gasoline, the "Volunteer Food Store" shared the marquee with oil company signs. Painted tin gas station signs were common elements of the commercial landscape. These were soon accompanied by the more durable porcelain enameled signs, a finish

created by fusing powdered glass onto metal sheeting with a high heat process.[4]

Dealer-operated stations came about in the 1930s. With the passage of chain store taxes in several states, oil companies were taxed for each location operated by a single firm. Standard Oil of Indiana responded by firing all their station employees and then giving them the option of leasing the station back.[5] This started the trend of company-operated stations becoming dealer-operated stations.

To bolster sagging revenues during the Depression, many stations started selling tires, batteries, and accessories. Stations consolidated repair bays, lubritoriums, and tire services under one roof. Gas station architecture also changed during the 1930s.

Streamline Moderne became the dominate style, incorporating speed lines, curved corners, and other design elements reflecting the illusion of speed. Gas station design began to relate to the automobile, instead of mimicking the architecture of accepted building types, such as cottages and civic monuments. Gas stations and the automobile had become fully integrated into the American landscape and lifestyle.

A change in pump technology in 1932 also altered the way people purchased gasoline. The Wayne Pump Company, a Ft. Wayne, Indiana company formed by former S. F. Bowser and Company employees in 1891, introduced the first calculator pump. Instead of reading a dial indicator for gallons dispersed and then consulting a price chart, station attendants now simply read the calculated figure on the pump. This innovation made all existing pumps obsolete and forced the competition to license the patented technology.[6]

As the forms that defined the skylines of the American city changed in the 1930s, so did the shape of gas pumps. Gasoline dispensers started mimicking the forms of modern streamlined skyscrapers, as did many products of industrial design. The machine aesthetic created contoured cowlings that sheathed mechanical components and conveyed a sense of efficiency and speed to the motorist.

World War II brought gas shortages that forced many track side discounters out of business. Station owners with long-term supply contracts survived, in part, by emphasizing repair service.[7] With the end of the wartime gasoline and tire rationing, Americans took to the road like never before. Corner service stations had become automotive repair stations and dealers learned to merchandise their services. Oil companies confidently proceeded to sell every drop of oil they produced.[8]

The Interstate Highway Bill of 1956 had a profound impact on gasoline marketing. Thousands of once-thriving gasoline stations became outmoded and modifications were made to the ones that survived. High-speed visibility was achieved by large, internally-lit plastic signs mounted on huge "high rise" posts. Motorists were traveling much faster and needed more time to stop and pull in for a fill-up.

The 1993 Cultural Landscape Analysis and Design Recommendations for Boston, Ohio contains general principles that are consistent with replacing the vintage pumps and signs that were removed from the M.D. Garage in the Fall of 1995. The vernacular and utilitarian characteristics of Boston are discussed in terms of a sense of honesty; things are what they seem. The mix of different periods has typified Boston throughout its history and should be continued.

Preserving the irregularity and casualness of the community should be done by retaining the informal mix of commercial, residential, and recreational functions. Historic photographs of the garage provide the documentary evidence needed to accurately replace the M.D. Garage missing signs and pumps with restored vintage signs and pumps. Reintroducing these small-scale elements will allow the building to continue contributing to the informal mix of functions and periods that comprise Boston's historic vernacular landscape.

References

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3 Witzel, *Gas Station Memories,* 39.

4 Ibid., 44.

5 Henderson, *Gas Stations,* 6.

6 Witzel, *Gas Station Memories,* 39.

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8 John Margolies, *Pump and Circumstance: Glory Days of the Gas Station,* (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 88.

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